SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS
MYSTERY IN SPACE
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NO. 22
IS THE WORLD REALLY ROUND? DISCOVER THE AMAZING SECRET OF...
"THE SQUARE EARTH!"

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THE SQUARE EARTH

SUPPOSE YOU WERE RETURNING HOME TO EARTH FROM A TRIP THROUGH SPACE AND WERE TOLD THAT YOUR PLANET HAD UNDERGONE A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION IN SHAPE -- FROM A ***ROUND GLOBE*** TO A ***SQUARE WORLD!*** WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? JASON WRIGHT DIDN'T -- AND WAS MANEUVERED INTO A POSITION WHERE HE HAD TO BACK HIS FIRM CONVICTION WITH HIS LIFE!

LOOK! THE EARTH HAS BECOME SQUARE-SHAPED!

WHAT FANTASTIC FATE HAS OVERTAKEN OUR PLANET AND EVERYONE WHO LIVED ON IT?

SY BARRY

1

ANOTHER METEOR FALLING INTO THIS MOON CRATER!

THAT MAKES 87 IN ONE HOUR, PRECISELY AS I PREDICTED!

ARE THESE SPACE-MEN ASTRONOMERS WHO ARE TABULATING IMPORTANT DATA ON THE MOON IN THE YEAR 2000?

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MYSTERY IN SPACE

As the Earthmen return to their space-ship, the reason for the meteor count becomes apparent...

You win our bet, Jason! How could you possibly guess the exact number of meteors that would fall into the crater?

It was no guess!

An ordinary crater's average is 24! But knowing that a particular crater's floor held magnetic lodestone, which attracts more iron meteors, this electronic brain of mine worked out the answer!

Later, on Earth, Zinda Lowell has a "cold" welcome for her fiance...

Jason Wright! You could win high honors in mathematical science! Why do you squander your talents as a cheap gambler?

Cheap? But, Zinda, I just won another $1,000! I've never lost a bet yet--and never will!

You've just been on a lucky streak!

Nonsense! My electronic brain never fails me! Watch... in three seconds I bet lightning will strike the Everest Tower! Three... two... one... zowie!

I love him but I don't want to marry an inveterate gambler! Isn't there anything I can do to make him give up that habit? I know... I'll ask my old friend, Professor Worth!

Later, as the brilliant scientist answers the girl's plea...

For Zinda's sake, my boy, will you give up gambling if you lose just one bet to me?

I accept the challenge, Professor! But I warn you, it'll prove an expensive proposition for you to try and defeat me!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

SOON, THE GREAT GAMBLING CONTEST BEGINS IN THE ASTEROID BELT BETWEEN MARS AND JUPITER...

AS YOU KNOW, PROFESSOR, A COLLISION BETWEEN TWO ASTEROIDS IS A RARE EVENT! I'LL BET YOU A THOUSAND THAT A COUPLE OF ASTEROIDS WILL COLLIDE IN EXACTLY 57 SECONDS!

IT HARDLY SEEMS FAIR TO YOU TO TAKE SUCH AN OUTLANDISH WAGER, BUT YOU'RE ON!

57 SECONDS LATER...

GREAT SOL! IT HAPPENED!

MY SECRET LAWS OF MATHEMATICS NEVER FAIL! THANKS FOR THE MONEY, PROFESSOR!

AFTER SEVERAL MORE BETS, WITH THE PROFESSOR ALWAYS ON THE LOSING END...

THAT COMET FELL IN THE SUN, AS I SAID! YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP, PROFESSOR! I'VE ALREADY WON ALL YOUR MONEY!

NO! I'M GOING TO SEE THIS THROUGH THE BITTER END! I'LL BET THIS NEW ATOMIC PRESSURE-RAY PROJECTOR INVENTION OF MINE NEXT!

AS LONG AS YOU INSIST ON YOUR HOPELESS CAUSE, PROFESSOR, I'LL LET YOU CHOOSE YOUR OWN BET--ANYTHING YOU WANT!

VERY GOOD! NO ASTRONOMER CAN PREDICT WHEN OR WHERE THE NEXT *NOVA*, OR EXPLODING STAR, WILL APPEAR! CAN YOU?

OF COURSE! LOOK IN THE CONSTELLATION URSUS MAJOR! NOW JUST WAIT FIVE SECONDS...

≥GASP≤ A *NOVA* FLASHED THERE, SUDDENLY! IT'S INCREDIBLE!

NOT REALLY, PROFESSOR! YOU FORGOT LIGHT TAKES YEARS TO CROSS OUTER SPACE TO OUR EYES! MY ELECTRONIC BRAIN LOCATED A STAR THAT REALLY EXPLODED A THOUSAND YEARS AGO!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

SOON AFTER, AS ZINDA SEES THE PROFESSOR'S LOSSES MOUNTING...

IT'S HOPELESS, PROFESSOR! PLEASE GIVE UP BEFORE YOU LOSE EVERYTHING YOU OWN!

NO! I'M DETERMINED TO WIN, SOMEHOW! I STILL HAVE THIS GOLD CUP... SIGH... TO BET WITH!

IN THE RINGS OF SATURN, AS THE BATTLE OF SCIENTIFIC WITS CONTINUES...

REMEMBER, PROFESSOR, AMONG THESE MILLIONS OF IRREGULAR CHUNKS OF ROCK, I'VE BET THAT WE'LL SEE ONE WITH A *PYRAMID*-SHAPE!

THERE IT IS! YOU WIN AGAIN, JASON!

POOR PROFESSOR! I'M REALLY GOING TO *RETURN* EVERYTHING I WON, LATER-- BUT NOT TILL HE ADMITS DEFEAT!

YOU BETTER CONCEDE NOW! YOU HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO BET!

OH, YES I HAVE... *MY LIFE!*

YOUR LIFE? PROFESSOR, I CAN'T MAKE A BET LIKE THAT!

DON'T WELCH, JASON! IT'S MY LAST CHANCE TO WIN! MY LIFE AGAINST YOURS AND THE LOSER MUST... *DIE!*

WE--WE'VE GONE TOO FAR! I WISH THERE WERE SOME HONORABLE WAY I COULD CALL OFF THE BET!

MAYBE YOU REALIZE NOW, JASON, HOW THE GAMBLING FEVER CAN LEAD A MAN TO UTTER RUIN... FINANCIALLY... AND MENTALLY!

LET'S ROLL DICE THIS TIME! BUT STAKING OUR VERY LIVES, WE MUST HAVE WORTHY DICE! THIS INVENTION YOU WON WILL FORM GIANT CELESTIAL DICE, WITH ITS POWERFUL ATOMIC PRESSURE-RAYS!

PROFESSOR! YOU'RE AIMING IT AT THE EARTH'S *MOON!*

STOP, PROFESSOR! YOU'LL WRECK THE MOON!

WHO CARES? IT'S A DEAD WORLD ANYWAY! MY SUPER-PRESSURE BEAM WILL SWIFTLY AND NEATLY FLATTEN IT TO FOUR SIDES!

YOU'RE MAD! BEFORE YOU USE THAT TERRIBLE MACHINE ANYMORE I'LL... UNHH!

YOU WON'T STOP ME! HA, HA, HAAAA!

WHEN JASON WRIGHT OPENS HIS HORRIFIED EYES...

H-HE OVERPOWERED YOU TOO, ZINDA?

YES AND LOOK--- HE FINISHED MOLDING THE MOON INTO A PERFECT SQUARE!

I ALSO MADE A SECOND SQUARE WHILE YOU WERE OUT COLD! SEE?

TH-THE EARTH TOO! A LIVING WORLD WRECKED, BILLIONS DEAD... ALL FOR A GAME OF CHANCE!

NOW I'LL BET THAT NORTH AMERICA'S FLAT SIDE TURNS UP NEXT ON EARTH! AND COPERNICUS CRATER ON THE MOON! WELL, JASON? MAKE YOUR BET!

I... I'LL BET ON AFRICA TURNING UP ON EARTH AND... ER... ARISTARCHUS CRATER ON LUNA!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

LOOK! I WON AND YOU LOST, JASON! CHOOSE YOUR DEATH! SHALL I CAST YOU OFF INTO SPACE? DROP YOU INTO THE SUN? OR WHAT?

I'VE LEARNED MY LESSON, ZINDA--- BUT TOO LATE! GAMBLING DOESN'T PAY, NOT WHEN IT CAN DRIVE EVEN A GREAT GENIUS LIKE PROFESSOR WORTH MAD! IF I GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE, I'LL *NEVER GAMBLE AGAIN!*

JASON, DARLING! AT LAST! YOU CAN FREE US NOW, PROFESSOR!

WH-WHAT? YOU'RE RELEASING ME? YOU'RE NOT... NOT--?

CRAZY? YES, JASON-- CRAZY LIKE A FOX! THIS WAS ALL A PLAN BETWEEN ZINDA AND ME, TO SHOCK YOU TO YOUR RIGHT SENSES!

THE EARTH AND MOON *"DICE"* WERE A HOAX! A CONCEALED MOVIE PROJECTOR THREW IMAGES ON THAT LENS WE PLANTED FOR YOUR EYES, WHILE YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS!

IT WAS ONLY AN OPTICAL ILLUSION, JASON! PLUS SUPERB ACTING BY PROFESSOR WORTH!

BUT YOU STILL LOST THAT FINAL BET, MY BOY! BY THEORY, IF EARTH AND LUNA WERE HUGE SQUARES, THEY'D *"ROLL"* THE WAY I SAID, UNDER SHIFTING GRAVITY! NOT LIKE YOUR WILD GUESS!

SO LOSING ONE BET, I'LL KEEP MY PROMISE TO GIVE UP GAMBLING FOREVER--*GLADLY!*

SAME OLD ROUND ROMANTIC MOON! AND YOU'RE THINKING OF WEDDING BELLS, ZINDA-- BET YOU TEN-TO-ONE... ER... I MEAN...

NEVER MIND, DARLING! THAT'S ONE BET I'LL GLADLY TAKE! AND YOU WIN!

THE END.

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Tootsie Roll
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BASEBALL'S MY SPORT—AND Tootsie Rolls MY FAVORITE CANDY
Tootsie POPS
—Fruit candy on the outside, TOOTSIE ROLL inside. Two treats for the price of one — only 2¢.
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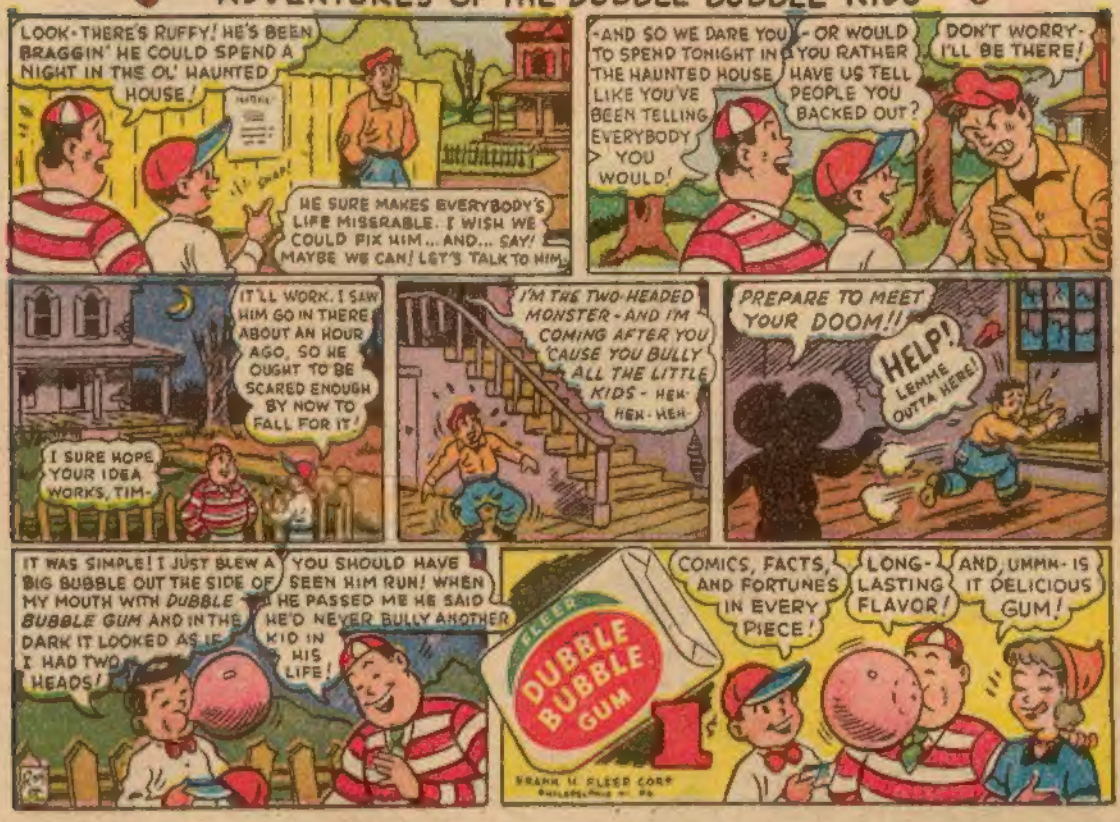
LOOK-THERE'S RUFFY! HE'S BEEN BRAGGIN' HE COULD SPEND A NIGHT IN THE OL' HAUNTED HOUSE!
SNAP!
HE SURE MAKES EVERYBODY'S LIFE MISERABLE. I WISH WE COULD FIX HIM... AND... SAY! MAYBE WE CAN! LET'S TALK TO HIM.
-AND SO WE DARE YOU TO SPEND TONIGHT IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE LIKE YOU'VE BEEN TELLING EVERYBODY YOU WOULD!
-OR WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE US TELL PEOPLE YOU BACKED OUT?
DON'T WORRY-I'LL BE THERE!
IT'LL WORK. I SAW HIM GO IN THERE ABOUT AN HOUR AGO, SO HE OUGHT TO BE SCARED ENOUGH BY NOW TO FALL FOR IT!
I SURE HOPE YOUR IDEA WORKS, TIM-
I'M THE TWO-HEADED MONSTER - AND I'M COMING AFTER YOU 'CAUSE YOU BULLY ALL THE LITTLE KIDS - HEH-HEH-HEH-
PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM!!
HELP! LEMME OUTTA HERE!
IT WAS SIMPLE! I JUST BLEW A BIG BUBBLE OUT THE SIDE OF MY MOUTH WITH DUBBLE BUBBLE GUM AND IN THE DARK IT LOOKED AS IF I HAD TWO HEADS!
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM RUN! WHEN HE PASSED ME HE SAID HE'D NEVER BULLY ANOTHER KID IN HIS LIFE!
FLEER
DUBBLE BUBBLE GUM
1
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AND, UMMM-IS IT DELICIOUS GUM!
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POLIO

Research will mean Victory!

GAMMA GLOBULIN—obtained from human blood—protects for a few weeks. But it is in very short supply.

When POLIO is around, follow these PRECAUTIONS

1 Keep clean
2 Don't get fatigued
3 Avoid new groups
4 Don't get chilled

A VACCINE

A safe and promising vaccine is being tested now, but results will not be known until 1955

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS

THE MEN WHO BOMBED THE SUN!

OUR SUN IS GRADUALLY COOLING OFF--BUT THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM, FOR SCIENTISTS CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATE THAT OUR SOLAR ORB WILL BE HOT ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN LIFE ON EARTH FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER TWO BILLION YEARS. BUT HAS THE SUN ALREADY COOLED TOO MUCH TO MAKE LIFE UNBEARABLE ON ***OTHER*** PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM? THAT MIGHT VERY WELL BE A PROBLEM THAT IS CONFRONTING CIVILIZATIONS ON THESE PLANETS ***NOW!***

WHEN OUR CATALYST BOMB REACHES THE SUN, IT WILL EXPLODE AND MAKE THE SUN 100 TIMES HOTTER THAN IT IS NOW!

IF SUCH A CALAMITY HAPPENS, IT WILL DESTROY ALL LIFE ON EARTH!

A ROCKET FLASHES 4000 MILES ABOVE THE EARTH'S SURFACE ANOTHER IMPORTANT STEP IN MAN'S CONQUEST OF SPACE...

NOW THAT MY ROCKET HAS REACHED THIS HEIGHT, IT'S IMPORTANT TO FIND OUT HOW IT WILL AFFECT ME PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY...

MOMENTS LATER...

A SUDDEN CONCENTRATION OF COSMIC RAYS! OHH... M-MY BRAIN... SOMETHING STRANGE IS HAPPENING TO ME...

MYSTERY IN SPACE

AS THE ROCKET-MAN DROPS UNCONSCIOUS, HIS SHIP FALTERS, THEN SCREAMS EARTHWARD--OUT OF CONTROL!

...AND CRASHES IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF A METROPOLIS...

BLAAM!!

AS AN AMBULANCE SPEEDS TO THE CRASH-SCENE...

IT'S MASON, THE ROCKET EXPERIMENTER! HE'S STILL ALIVE! RUSH HIM TO THE HOSPITAL!

LATER...

HE'S BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR TEN HOURS!

HIS BODY ORGANS ARE FUNCTIONING PERFECTLY! HE SHOULD COME OUT OF IT...IN TIME...

AS THE DOCTORS STEP OUT OF MASON'S ROOM...

WE'LL HAVE A STRICT WATCH KEPT OVER HIM, SO WHEN HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS...

BUT DOCTOR! I *HAVE* REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS!

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MASON! HOW--? ONLY A MOMENT AGO WE LEFT YOU IN YOUR ROOM...

THAT'S TRUE! BUT I'M ALSO OUT HERE! FOLLOW ME INTO THE ROOM AND I'LL EXPLAIN!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

AS THE TWO DOCTORS RE-ENTER THE ROOM...

THERE ARE TWO OF YOU!

I AM A THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROJECTION, FORMED BY MY--ER, MASON'S BRAIN! A BARRAGE OF COSMIC RAYS ACTIVATED THE 80% OF THE HUMAN BRAIN WHICH IS ALWAYS DORMANT!

THE MULTIPLE INCREASE IN BRAIN POWER ENABLED ME--MASON--TO CREATE A MENTAL DUPLICATE OF MYSELF, ENDOWED WITH STRANGE POWERS! I CAN CHANGE THE ENERGY STATE OF MY BODY... AND THUS TELEPORT MYSELF ANYWHERE IN AN INSTANT!

DO YOU MIND IF WE PUT YOU THROUGH SOME TESTS?

SOON AFTER IN A TELEVISION STUDIO...

THIS SCREEN IS HOOKED UP TO A CAMERA IN HOLLYWOOD--WATCH IT AS I DEMONSTRATE MY POWERS OF TELEPORTATION!

THE NEXT INSTANT--!

HE'S DISAPPEARED FROM THIS ROOM!

HE'S TRAVELED 3,000 MILES--IN A SPLIT-SECOND! THERE HE IS--IN HOLLYWOOD!

POP!

EVEN THOUGH I AM A MENTAL PROJECTION, I AM STILL JOHN MASON! AS A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF MY VASTLY AUGMENTED POWERS, I SHALL NEXT TELEPORT MYSELF TO THE SURFACE OF THE MOON!

AS SWIFT AS THOUGHT, MASON'S MENTAL DOUBLE APPEARS ON EARTH'S SATELLITE...

I'LL BRING BACK SOMETHING UNIQUE FROM THE MOON TO PROVE... THAT DOME--THOSE MACHINES! THERE MUST BE LIVING CREATURES HERE!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

MASON INVESTIGATES THE STRANGE STRUCTURE ...

--AND WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW AGE FOR OUR RACE!

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION COMING FROM INSIDE THAT DOME--AND I CAN UNDERSTAND IT!

INSTANTLY, MASON TELEPORTS HIMSELF INSIDE THE LUNAR DOME ...

FORTUNATELY, MY POWER OVER MY BODY ENABLES ME TO BE UNSEEN BY THE PLUTONIANS!

BILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, THE SUN SENT SUFFICIENT HEAT TO PLUTO, THE PLANET OF OUR BIRTH, TO ENABLE US TO BASK IN ITS WARMTH!

AS THE SUN COOLED, WE HEAT-PEOPLE WERE FORCED TO EMIGRATE TO HOTTER PLANETS CLOSER TO THE SUN--NEPTUNE, URANUS, SATURN, JUPITER, MARS, EARTH, VENUS, AND FINALLY, MERCURY!

"NOW EVEN MERCURY HAS BECOME TOO COLD FOR US, AND WE HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL OF THE RADIOACTIVE ORES THAT HAVE GIVEN US ARTIFICIAL WARMTH ..."

"AND SO THE MOON'S RADIOACTIVE ORES HAVE KEPT US ALIVE, WHILE WE PREPARED TO HURL A CATALYST BOMB INTO THE SUN IN ORDER TO REIGNITE ITS ORIGINAL HEAT!"

BRRR! MERCURY IS NOW ONLY 600 DEGREES HOT!

THE EXPLORATION FLEET REPORTS IT HAS FOUND RADIOACTIVE ORES ON THE MOON OF PLANET III! WE'RE SETTING UP A BASE THERE!

THE BOMB HAS ALMOST REACHED THE SUN! WHEN WE EXPLODE IT, THE SUN WILL BECOME 100 TIMES AS HOT AS IT IS NOW!

MERCURY AND VENUS WILL BE VAPORIZED, BUT EARTH AND ITS MOON WILL REMAIN--JUST HOT ENOUGH FOR US TO LIVE!

NOW THAT THE CATALYST BOMB HAS REACHED THE SURFACE OF THE SUN, WE'LL WAIT TILL IT SINKS DOWN INTO THAT GASEOUS INTERIOR--AND THEN SET IT OFF!

MUST FIND THAT BOMB--AND NEUTRALIZE IT! IF THEY RAISE THE SUN'S HEAT, ALL LIFE ON EARTH WILL DIE!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

IN AN INSTANT, MASON'S MENTAL DOUBLE FLASHES 93 MILLION MILES TO THE SUN...

I MAY HAVE ONLY SECONDS TO SEARCH THIS VAST SOLAR BODY FOR THE CATALYST BOMB!

THE BOMB MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE! I'VE MEASURED ITS LINE-OF FLIGHT TO THIS AREA!

THROUGH GIANT TONGUES OF SUPER-HOT FLAMES, THE DESPERATE SEARCH CONTINUES..

I-I'M GETTING WEAKER! MY MENTAL BODY CAN'T WITHSTAND THIS TREMENDOUS HEAT AND ENERGY MUCH LONGER! I MUST FIND THE BOMB--

BYZON!

AND THEN AS HE PLUNGES INTO A SOLAR PIT...

THERE IT IS! I'VE GOT TO GET IT OUT! IF IT EXPLODES WHILE I HANDLE IT--!

GRABBING UP THE CATALYST BOMB, MASON TELEPORTS HIMSELF BACK TO THE MOON...

I-I CAN'T G-GO ON MUCH LONGER! THE SUN HAS WEAKENED ME! I'VE GOT TO BRING THE CATALYST BOMB TO THE HEAT-MEN! MAKE A DEAL WITH THEM-- RADIOACTIVE ORES FROM EARTH FOR PEACE!

BUT AS MASON ENTERS THE HEAT MEN'S DOME...

THE BOMB IS SUFFICIENTLY BELOW THE SUN'S SURFACE! I'M GOING TO SET IT OFF!

STOP! I'VE GOT THE BOMB ***HERE***! DON'T--!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

THE NEXT INSTANT...

DR. ANSTRUTHER! THERE'S BEEN A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION ON THE MOON!

WHILE BACK AT THE HOSPITAL WHERE JOHN MASON LIES UNCONSCIOUS..

I WONDER WHAT THE EYES AND EARS OF MASON'S PROJECTED IMAGE ARE SENDING TO HIS BRAIN?

IT'S EXACTLY ONE HOUR SINCE HIS DUPLICATE WAS TELEPORTED TO THE MOON.. WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED THERE?

SUDDENLY MASON STIRS... AND SITS UP...

WH-WHO ARE YOU? WH-WHERE AM I?

MASON--WHAT HAPPENED ON THE MOON? WHAT WAS THAT TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION?

MOON?... EXPLOSION?... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOUR MENTAL PROJECTION.. THE BEING YOU FORMED WITH YOUR SUPER ACTIVE BRAIN! WHERE IS IT?

I'M SORRY, YOU'RE QUESTIONING ME ABOUT THINGS I DON'T KNOW! THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS GOING DOWN IN MY EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET!

YOU MEAN, YOUR EXTRA-ORDINARY BRAIN POWER IS GONE?

RAPIDLY, THE DOCTORS TELL MASON WHAT THEY KNOW OF THE STRANGE STORY...

-AND THEN YOU WOKE UP!

I DON'T REMEMBER A THING! SUBCONSCIOUSLY I FEEL SOMETHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED--SOMETHING MY PROJECTED DOUBLE DID! BUT WHAT WAS IT? I GUESS WE'LL NEVER KNOW!

AND THE MOON...BEARING A TREMENDOUS NEW CRATER AT THE SITE OF THE CATALYST BOMB EXPLOSION--MOVES PLACIDLY ACROSS THE SKY...

The End

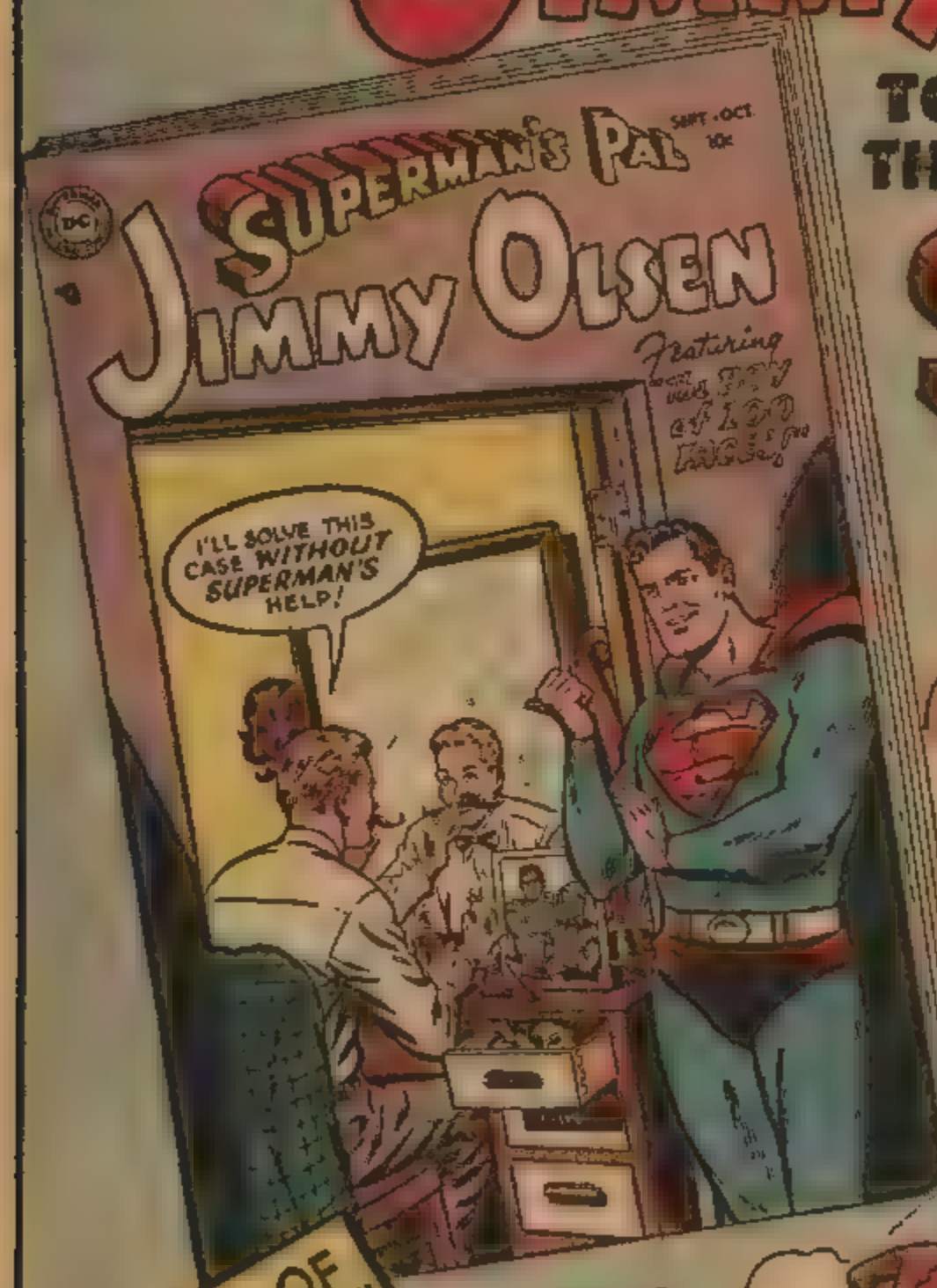
Here he is—

THE ONE AND ONLY

JIMMY OLSEN

TOGETHER WITH THE ONE AND ONLY

SUPERMAN



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"THE BOY OF 100 FACES!"

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"The CASE OF THE LUMBERJACK JINX!"

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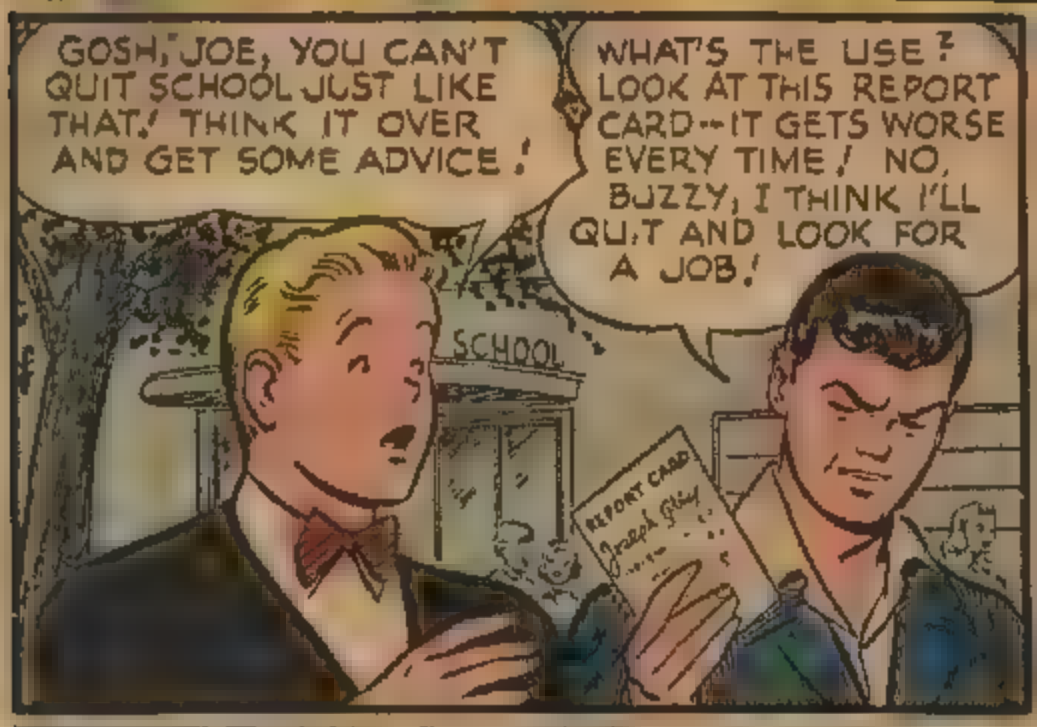
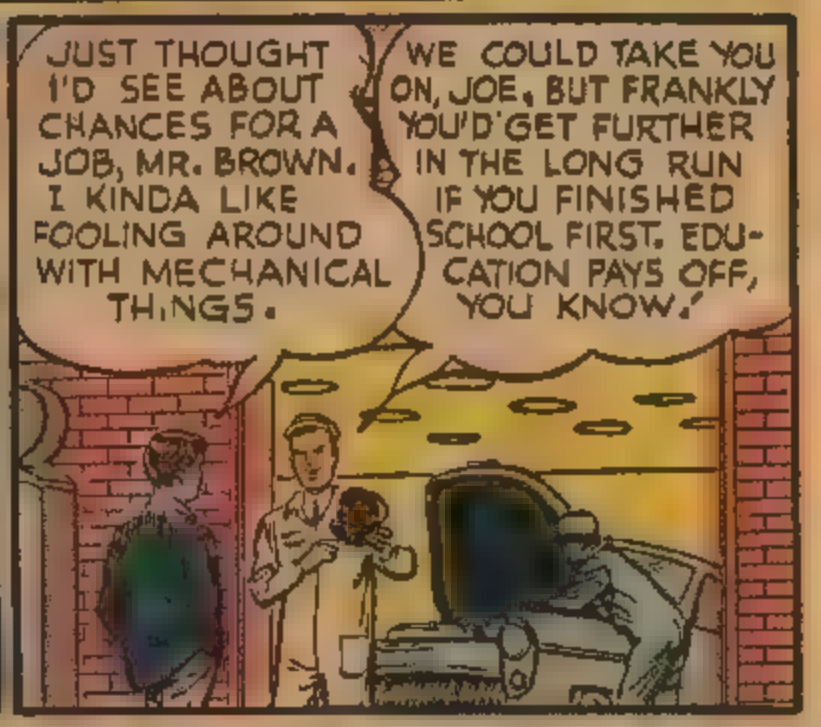
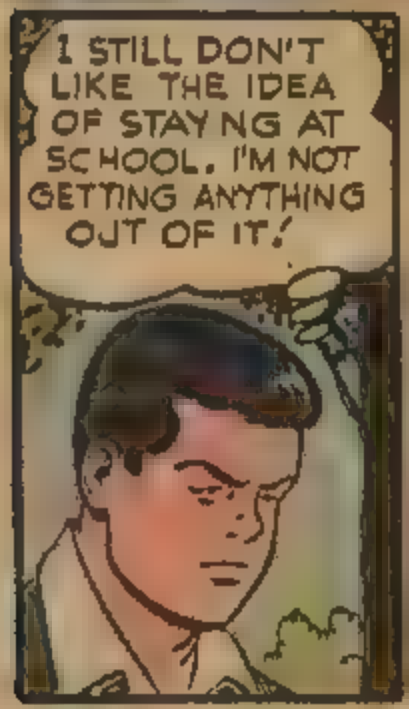
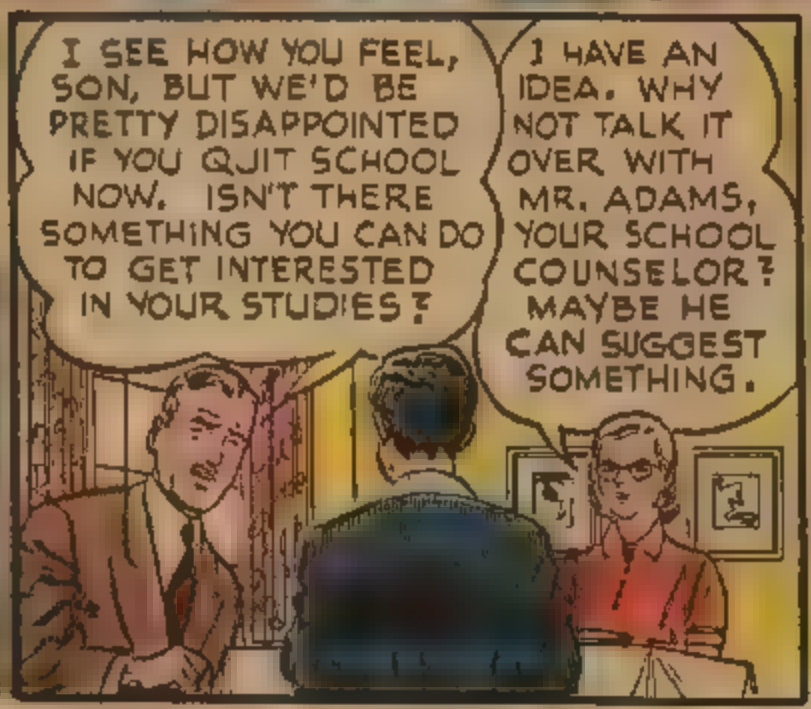
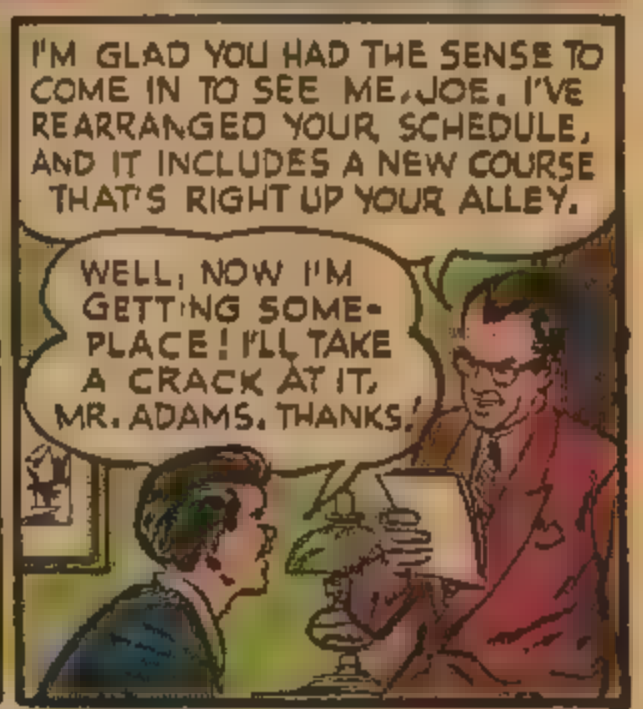
BUZZY has the answer to "SCHOOL BLUES!"

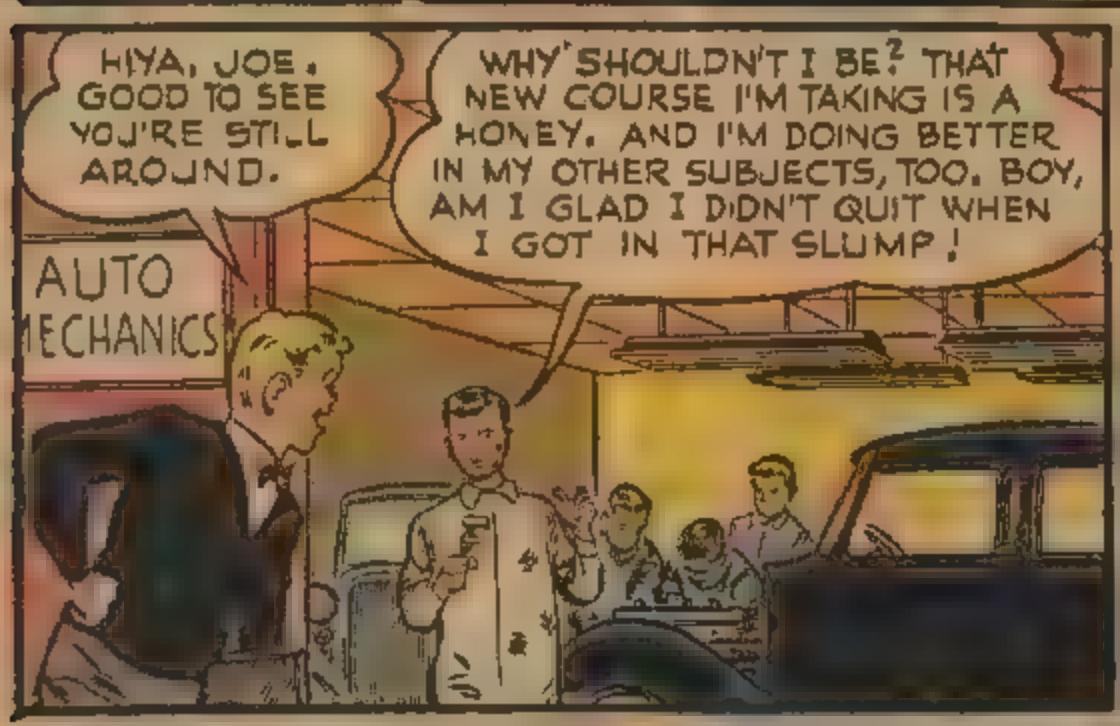

GOSH, JOE, YOU CAN'T QUIT SCHOOL JUST LIKE THAT! THINK IT OVER AND GET SOME ADVICE!
WHAT'S THE USE? LOOK AT THIS REPORT CARD--IT GETS WORSE EVERY TIME! NO, BUZZY, I THINK I'LL QUIT AND LOOK FOR A JOB!
SCHOOL
REPORT CARD

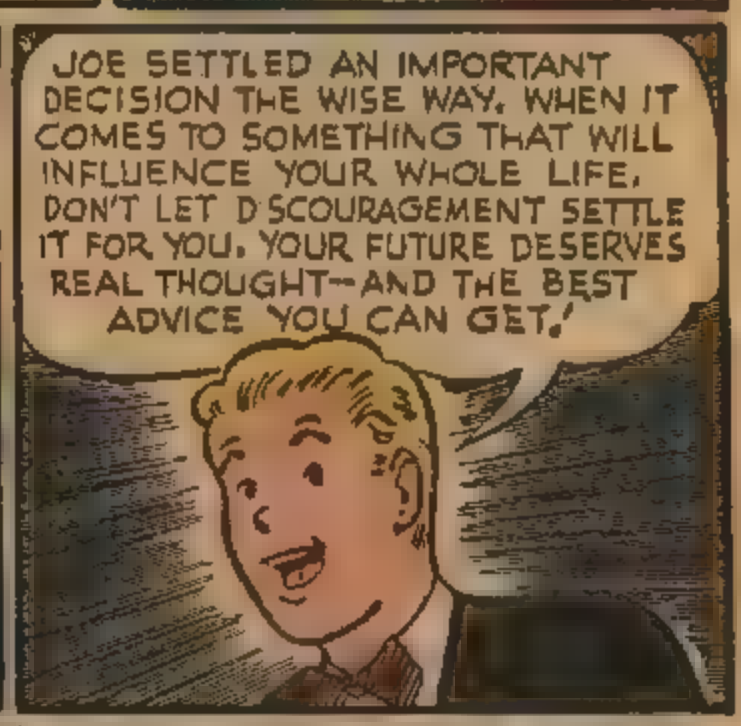

JUST THOUGHT I'D SEE ABOUT CHANCES FOR A JOB, MR. BROWN. I KINDA LIKE FOOLING AROUND WITH MECHANICAL THINGS.
WE COULD TAKE YOU ON, JOE, BUT FRANKLY YOU'D GET FURTHER IN THE LONG RUN IF YOU FINISHED SCHOOL FIRST. EDUCATION PAYS OFF, YOU KNOW!




I SEE HOW YOU FEEL, SON, BUT WE'D BE PRETTY DISAPPOINTED IF YOU QUIT SCHOOL NOW. ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TO GET INTERESTED IN YOUR STUDIES?
I HAVE AN IDEA. WHY NOT TALK IT OVER WITH MR. ADAMS, YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR? MAYBE HE CAN SUGGEST SOMETHING.


I'M GLAD YOU HAD THE SENSE TO COME IN TO SEE ME, JOE. I'VE REARRANGED YOUR SCHEDULE, AND IT INCLUDES A NEW COURSE THAT'S RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY.
WELL, NOW I'M GETTING SOMEPLACE! I'LL TAKE A CRACK AT IT, MR. ADAMS. THANKS!


HIYA, JOE. GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE STILL AROUND.
WHY SHOULDN'T I BE? THAT NEW COURSE I'M TAKING IS A HONEY. AND I'M DOING BETTER IN MY OTHER SUBJECTS, TOO. BOY, AM I GLAD I DIDN'T QUIT WHEN I GOT IN THAT SLUMP!
AUTO MECHANICS


JOE SETTLED AN IMPORTANT DECISION THE WISE WAY. WHEN IT COMES TO SOMETHING THAT WILL INFLUENCE YOUR WHOLE LIFE, DON'T LET DISCOURAGEMENT SETTLE IT FOR YOU. YOUR FUTURE DESERVES REAL THOUGHT--AND THE BEST ADVICE YOU CAN GET.

PUBLISHED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE ASSEMBLY, COORDINATING ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL HEALTH, WELFARE AND RECREATION AGENCIES OF THE U. S.

The VENUS SKY-TRAP!

HERE COMES THE SPACESHIP FROM EARTH--IN ANSWER TO OUR INVITATION! THEY DON'T SUSPECT THE GRIM JOKE WE HAVE PLAYED ON THEM!

IN THE NEAR FUTURE THE FIRST SPACESHIP WILL BE READY TO BLAST OFF FROM EARTH ON THE PIONEER VOYAGE TO ANOTHER PLANET! BUT WHICH PLANET WILL BE THE FIRST PORT OF CALL? **MARS--VENUS--SATURN?** THAT WAS THE PROBLEM THAT CONFRONTED OUR SPACEMEN... WHEN A DELEGATION UNEXPECTEDLY ARRIVED FROM ONE OF THE PLANETS AND TRIED TO "SELL" THEM ON THE IDEA OF VISITING THEIR PLANET FIRST!

DR. DUNCAN WAYNE, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED STATES FLIGHT SOCIETY, PRESIDES OVER A MOMENTOUS MEETING...

GENTLEMEN, NOW THAT OUR FIRST SPACESHIP IS READY TO TAKE OFF FROM EARTH, WE MUST DECIDE WHICH PLANET TO VISIT FIRST!

I SUGGEST MARS! IT IS NOW AT ITS CLOSEST APPROACH TO EARTH--AND OF ALL PLANETS IS MOST LIKELY TO SUSTAIN LIFE...

PARDON US! THERE IS INTELLIGENT LIFE **ONLY** ON THE PLANET **VENUS!**

STUNNED AUDIENCE TURNS TO FACE TWO STRANGE-LOOKING FIGURES WHO HAVE ENTERED THE ROOM...

GREETINGS, EARTHMEN! WE ARE AMBASSADORS FROM *VENUS*-- DELEGATED TO OFFER YOU THE MOST ENTICING TERMS FOR VISITING OUR PLANET!

WE HAVE PREPARED AN ILLUSTRATED BROCHURE SHOWING OUR PLANET'S ATTRACTIONS--FERTILE FARMLANDS, UNTAPPED MINERAL RESOURCES, COLONIZATION RIGHTS!

"SEE FOR YOURSELF! THE WEALTH OF OUR PLANET IS YOURS FOR THE ASKING..."

IT IS ONLY NECESSARY TO CLEAR OUR ATMOSPHERE OF THE DENSE CLOUDS FOR EARTHMEN TO LIVE IN SAFETY AND COMFORT!

THAT CAN EASILY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY OUR RAINMAKING TECHNIQUES!

AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE SOCIETY AGREES TO SEND ITS SHIP TO VENUS, AND PREPARATIONS ARE IMMEDIATELY BEGUN FOR THE PIONEER FLIGHT...

YOU SAY SILVER IODIDE SHOT INTO THE CLOUDY SKIES OF VENUS WILL CAUSE RAIN TO FALL?

DEFINITELY! AND AFTER THE TREMENDOUS RAINFALL, VENUS WILL HAVE A CLOUD-FREE SKY!

SOON, THE GIANT ROCKET ROARS UP FROM EARTH...

TOO BAD THE VENUSIANS COULDN'T COME [redacted] DUNCAN!

THEY SAY THEY HAVE THEIR OWN TRANSPORT, AND WILL MEET US ON VENUS...

DAYS LATER, AS THE SPACESHIP SPIRALS DOWN TO THE SURFACE OF THE SECOND PLANET OUTWARD FROM THE SUN...

THERE'S THE CLEARING, JUST AS THE VENUSIANS DESCRIBED IT!

I'LL TELL THE CREW TO PREPARE TO UNLOAD THE SILVER IODIDE CANNON!

SHORTLY AFTER LANDING...

THE CANNON ARE READY TO FIRE THE SILVER IODIDE INTO THE CLOUDS!

THE CONCRETE SHELTERS ARE UP...WE'D BETTER GET INTO THEM! ONCE THE RAIN STARTS POURING DOWN, IT'LL TEMPORARILY FLOOD THE PLANET!

IN THEIR CONCRETE SHELTER, DUNCAN PRESSES A FIRING SWITCH...

KABLAMM!

BOOM!

AS THE SILVER IODIDE CHANGES DENSE VENUSIAN CLOUDS INTO RAIN...

THE CHEMICAL WORKS HERE JUST AS IT DOES ON EARTH! THE SKIES WILL CLEAR AND SUNLIGHT WILL BREAK THROUGH!

SUDDENLY, A SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT...

THE RAINWATER--IT DISAPPEARED! IT NEVER REACHED THE GROUND! WHERE DID IT GO?

WHERE DID THE WATER GO?--THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND ON THE PLANET MARS!...

OUR PLAN HAS WORKED! THE EARTHMEN RELEASED THE CLOUD-WATERS OF VENUS WHICH WERE INSTANTLY TELEPORTED ACROSS SPACE TO FILL OUR CANALS!

"TELEPORTATION IS A PROCESS INSTANTLY TRANSMITTING MATERIALS FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER!

MEANWHILE, ON VENUS, A NEW CRISIS ARISES...

THE WATER DISAPPEARED BEFORE IT HIT THE GROUND! HOW IS IT POSSIBLE?

DR. DUNCAN, A PARTY OF VENUSIANS HAS JUST ARRIVED IN CAMP!

ONCE AGAIN DUNCAN FACES VENUSIANS--BUT THIS TIME...

WE SPEAK BY MECHANICAL TRANSLATORS.. AIR-BREATHERS, WHO ARE YOU?

THESE VENUSIANS HAVE GILLS! THEIR GLASS HELMETS ARE FILLED WITH WATER! THEY DON'T RESEMBLE THE OTHER VENUSIANS AT ALL!

QUICKLY, DUNCAN EXPLAINS THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE INTERPLANETARY TRIP...

--SO WHEN YOUR AMBASSADORS INVITED US TO VENUS--

AMBASSADORS? WE SENT NO AMBASSADORS TO EARTH!

THEN, OUT OF THE EMPTY AIR, THERE APPEARS...

THE AMBASSADOR WHO CAME TO EARTH!

HE IS NOT A VENUSIAN! HE BREATHES AIR! TRUE VENUSIANS ARE WATER-BREATHERS LIVING IN THE SEA!

POP!

YES, DR. DUNCAN--I'M NOT AN INHABITANT OF VENUS! I AM A MARTIAN! I WILL EXPLAIN QUICKLY--FOR THIS HEAVY VENUSIAN AIR IS DEADLY TO MARTIANS!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO SPACESHIPS, WE CAN INSTANTLY TRAVEL ANYWHERE IN SPACE BY ***TELEPORTATION.*** IT WAS BY MEANS OF TELEPORTATION THAT WE SENT VENUS' RAIN TO MARS!

BUT WHY DID YOU TRICK **US** INTO GOING TO VENUS AND MAKING THE RAIN FALL?

VENUS IS THE ONLY PLANET POSSESSING A UNIQUE SUBSTANCE WHICH I SHALL CALL ***X!*** IT IS FORMED WHEN VENUS' WATER FALLS THROUGH ITS ATMOSPHERE! SINCE WE LACK THE ABILITY OF MAKING RAIN FALL, WE HAD TO DEVISE A PLAN OF MAKING ***YOU*** DO IT FOR US!

NOW THAT WE HAVE TELEPORTED THE ***SUBSTANCE-X*** WATER TO MARS, WE CAN MAKE THE SUPER-BOMBS WE NEED TO CONQUER ***EARTH--VENUS--*** THE WHOLE ***SOLAR SYSTEM!***

WHY, YOU DOUBLE-DYED DECEIVERS, I'LL--

BUT AS DUNCAN LUNGES FOR THE MARTIAN,

THE MARTIAN VANISHED! HE TELEPORTED HIMSELF BACK TO HIS PLANET!

POP!

I MUST RETURN TO EARTH AND ALERT OUR PEOPLE OF THE THREAT FROM MARS!

DAYS LATER, AFTER DUNCAN HAS REPORTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY...

I MOVE WE USE THE HYDROGEN BOMB ON OUR ACKNOWLEDGED ENEMY, THE MARTIANS!

DELAY WOULD BE FATAL! UPON COMPLETION OF THEIR DEADLY X-BOMBS THE MARTIANS **COULD** BOMBARD **US** DIRECT FROM THEIR PLANET!

THE DELIBERATE KILLING OF THE WHOLE MARTIAN RACE SHOULD BE AVOIDED, IF POSSIBLE! I HAVE A SIMPLER--AND MORE EFFECTIVE SOLUTION--ONE THAT DOES NOT ENTAIL PLANETARY HOMICIDE WITH ATOMIC BOMBS! LISTEN--

MYSTERY IN SPACE

ALL EARTH JOINS TO CONSTRUCT A SPACE FLEET, AND A SHORT WHILE LATER...

THE SHIPS ARE FULLY LOADED WITH THE --UH-- BOMBS!

LET'S HOPE MY PLAN WORKS!

DAYS LATER AS THE FLEET NEARS THE RED PLANET...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, FREEB? ARE THE EARTHMEN GOING TO BOMB US?

NO! IT ISN'T THEIR NATURE TO CAUSE THE WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF A PLANET!

AS THE SPACESHIPS MAKE A BOMBING RUN OVER THE MARTIAN CANALS...

THEY ARE BOMBING US--BUT THEIR BOMBS DON'T EXPLODE!

THE NEXT DAY, AFTER THE EARTH FLEET HAS LEFT...

OUR CANAL WATERS HAVE TURNED INTO SOLID CONCRETE!

THE EARTHMEN TRICKED US--THEIR BOMBS WERE--*CEMENT!* NOW WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO OBTAIN *SUBSTANCE X* FOR OUR BOMBS! THEY HAVE WRECKED OUR PLANS TO CONQUER THE SOLAR SYSTEM!

LATER, BACK ON EARTH...

DR. DUNCAN, WHAT MADE YOU THINK OF THE INGENIOUS IDEA OF USING CEMENT INSTEAD OF BOMBS?

THE DANGER TO US WAS THE VENUSIAN WATER--ELIMINATE THE WATER AND THE THREAT WOULD DISAPPEAR! THE SIMPLEST WAY WAS TO TURN THE WATER INTO *CONCRETE!*

SOON AFTER, ON VENUS...

WHAT GREATER REWARD CAN WE GIVE EARTH THAN TO FULFILL THE PROMISES OF THE "*MARTIAN AMBASSADORS*"? WE GRANT YOU ALL RIGHTS TO THE *LAND* OF VENUS! WE VENUSIANS NEED ONLY THE SEA!

THIS IS WHAT I CALL A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN PLANETS!

The End

DISCOVERY OF INVISIBLE WORLDS!

THE revolutions of the planets around the sun, the fall of meteors on earth, the flashing of comets through space, the incredible speeds of distant stars and galaxies racing across the cosmic void—all of these motions are wholly dependent upon and governed by a force we call *gravitation*. And by working with the laws of motion, as effected by gravity, our mathematical astronomers have performed such incredible feats of discovery that they stagger the minds of ordinary mortals.

By an understanding of gravity, our astronomical wizards can easily weigh or determine the mass and orbits of stars and other heavenly bodies that they have not seen, cannot see, and may never see in their lifetime—and be as sure as they are alive that their calculations are precisely correct!

Time and time again in the past such calculations—predictions, if you prefer—have proven them correct. Perhaps the outstanding examples of this are the "discovery" of other planets in our solar system by mathematics—years before they were discovered visually.

For a long time Uranus was believed to be the outermost planet of our solar system. But when astronomers noted that the orbit of Uranus veered ever so slightly from the orbit precise calculations said it must have, they became disturbed. When re-checking proved that something was amiss—certainly not their calculations—the sky-scanners reasoned that an unknown force was pulling Uranus out of its calculated position. They figured out what this force might be, where it would be, and then looked for it. The result—the discovery of a new planet outside the orbit of Uranus—*Neptune!*

Yet *prior* to this amazing discovery of a new planet in 1846, astronomers had previously figured out Neptune's approximate size, mass, and orbit!

Thus Neptune assumed Uranus' role as the outermost planet of our solar system—but only for a while, 84 years to be precise. History repeated itself, astronomically speaking, and the same sort of thing occurred again. Careful observation over many years disclosed an unusual fact: Uranus was still erratic; it was not behaving properly, it was still not strictly keeping to its calculated orbit even after due allowance had been made for the gravitational pull of Neptune. Once again suspicious astronomers began to suspect that still another planet beyond Neptune was the culprit that was pulling Uranus from its predetermined course.

Professor Lowell of Flagstaff Observatory in Arizona worked out the orbit of this trans-Neptunian body, and in 1930, some years after his death, the suspect was spotted—the new planet *Pluto* was discovered quite near the place in the sky Professor Lowell said it would be, nearly a thousand million miles outside the orbit of Neptune.

Perhaps an even greater achievement was that of Edmond Halley, who calculated correctly the orbit and so was able to predict the precise time of return of the comet which now bears his name. This was a major pioneering

achievement, the very first time that such a calculation had been possible and attempted. Newton had just about set forth his revolutionary laws of gravitation and motion, and although they had been untried and untested, Halley used them to compute many details of a bright comet that appeared in August, 1682.

Halley claimed that if Newton's laws were correct, this comet would re-appear after an absence of about 76 years, the exact month and week depending upon how much Jupiter and the other big planets attracted it on its way, which calculations he had not time to complete. Halley knew that he would be dead before the 76 years elapsed, so he called upon future generations to witness if his prophecy were fulfilled.

The comet did return, 17 years after Halley's death, and to quote a magazine, "with less proportionate departure from his schedule than the crack express train 'Congressional Limited' makes in its Washington-New York run." The comet has been known as *Halley's Comet* ever since, and its history has been definitely traced back as far as 240 B.C., recurring at intervals of about 76 years. Its next scheduled visit is set for 1986.

AMAZING WHITE DWARF STARS!

One of the most interesting types of peculiar stars in our universe is the group of white dwarfs—of which about 115 have been individually discovered to date. They derive their name from the fact that in color they are quite similar to the so-called white A and F stars, although less luminous than the latter by 10,000 to several 100,000 times.

The white dwarf stars are intrinsically faint because they are small, a few being actually smaller than the earth! Probably the most astonishing thing about all these stars is that despite their dwarfish dimensions they have masses comparable to the sun's. For example, the star AC+70°8247 has a diameter only about 0.005 times the sun's—or about half the diameter of the earth. Its mass, however, is 2.8 times that of the sun. Consequently, the star's mean density is 36,000,000 times that of water!

At the surface of the earth a one-tenth inch cube of average material from this white dwarf would weight almost 1300 pounds! At the surface of the star, however, this same piece of material would weigh 2,200,000 tons, for the surface gravity of this star is 3,400,000 times the earth's. On this white dwarf world a 150-pound man, though his body were as strong as steel, would be crushed to tissue-thinness by his own 250,000 tons of weight.

The enormous compressive force of the white dwarf's tremendous surface gravity causes its atmosphere to increase in density about a billion times through a depth of just 15 feet; consequently the whole atmosphere of this amazing white dwarf is only 10 to 15 feet thick!

A little over one year ago the discovery of the smallest known star was announced—a white dwarf. The star, known by its catalogue number L 886-6, is only 2500 miles in diameter, making it only a little bigger than our moon, and smaller than the planet Mercury.

The amount of material in the newly found star cannot be measured directly (only when two stars revolve around each other can gravity enable us to determine the weights of each), but astronomers have made a reasonable guess, taking into account its diameter and their previously ascertained knowledge of white dwarf stars. The incredible statistics show that the star is about 40% heavier than our sun, making the average material of the star about 55,000,000 times as dense as water. If material from this white dwarf could be packed into an ordinary match box on earth it would weigh 1,000 tons!

NEW STAR ECLIPSES!

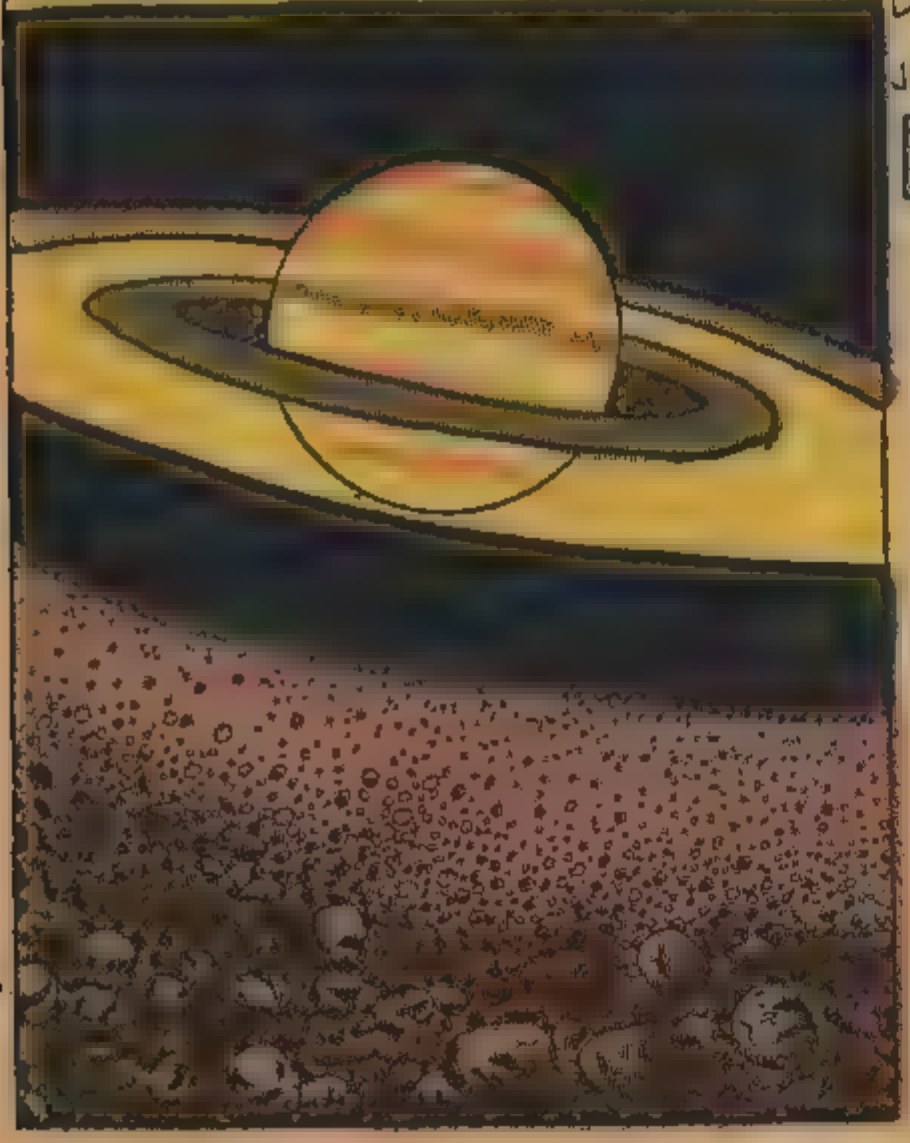
A remarkable coincidence occurred during the solar eclipses of June 8, 1918 and June 19, 1936. On the evening of the first date, a new star or *nova* was observed in the constellation Aquilla. During the 1936 eclipse a nova flared forth in Lacerta. The occurrence of novae and eclipses are rare enough to cause excitement in astronomical circles.

Will another nova be discovered on June 30, 1954, the next eclipse in this series? The answer will have been known by the time this appears in print— but we warrant the chances are against discovering another nova—for eclipses and novae have about as much in common as the discovery of radium and the planet Pluto.

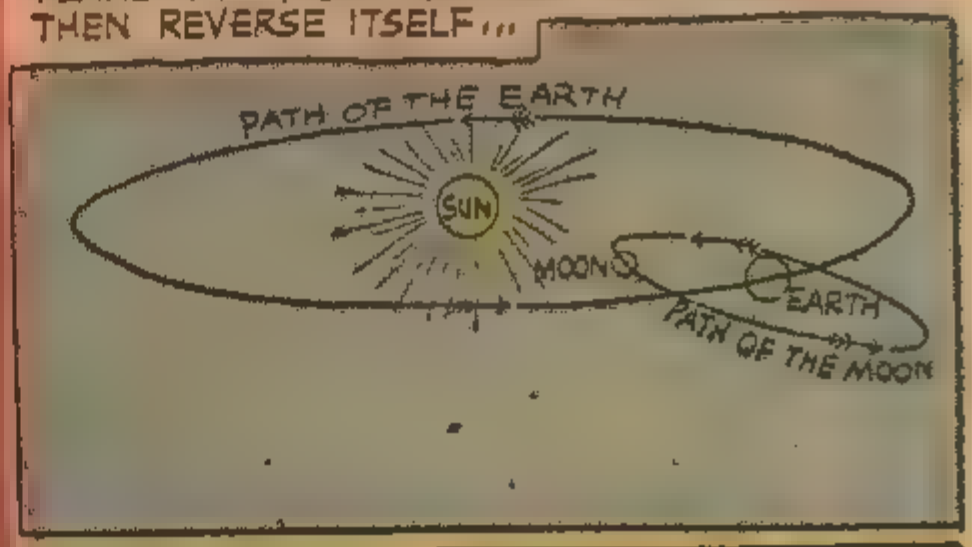
GIANTS of the TELESCOPE!

PIERRE SIMON LAPLACE (1749 - 1827)

HIS RESEARCHES INDICATED THAT CONTRARY TO ACCEPTED THEORY, THE RINGS OF SATURN WERE NOT SOLID (*AND PROVED LATER TO BE COMPOSED OF MYRIADS OF TINY OBJECTS*)...

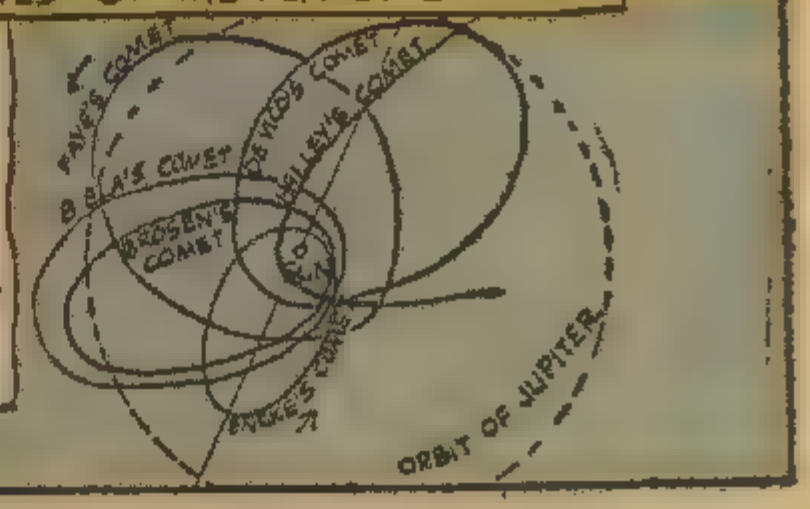


WHILE STUDYING THE MOON'S MOTION, LAPLACE DISCOVERED THAT FAR FROM BEING REGULAR, IT WAS SLOWLY ACCELERATING, LEADING TO A SHORTENING OF THE MONTH. AFTER 24,000 YEARS THIS ACCELERATION WILL CEASE AND THEN REVERSE ITSELF...

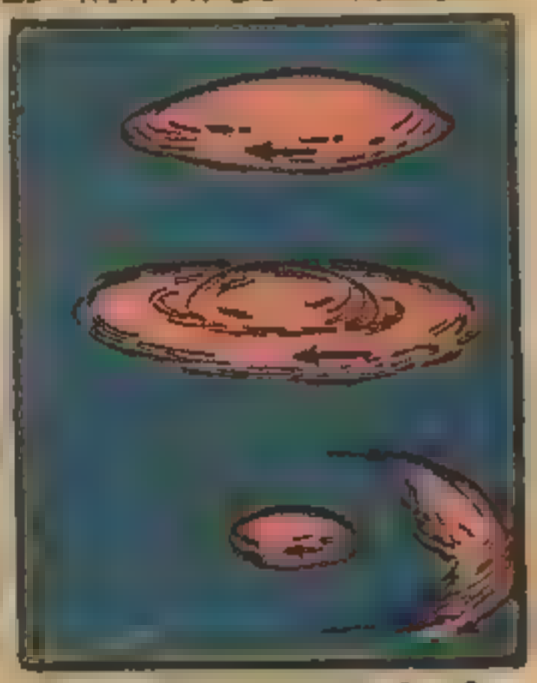


THIS FRENCH ASTRONOMER WAS THE FIRST TO SUGGEST THAT A NUMBER OF COMETS ROAMING THROUGH SPACE HAD BEEN DIVERTED FROM THEIR ORIGINAL ORBITS AND HAD BECOME "CAPTIVES" OF THE PLANET JUPITER...

SEVERAL COMETS WHOSE ORBITS HAVE BEEN DEVIATED BY JUPITER.



HIS GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO ASTRONOMY WAS H S THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. IT MAINTAINED THAT AT SOME REMOTE PERIOD IN THE PAST, THE ORIGINAL MATTER WHICH NOW FORMS THE SOLAR SYSTEM BEGAN TO ROTATE RAPIDLY, FLATTENING THE POLES SO MUCH THAT THE EQUATOR BULGED OUT AND SPLIT OFF INTO A SERIES OF RINGS. EVENTUALLY THE RINGS BROKE OFF AND BECAME THE PLANETS. IN TURN, THE RAPIDLY MOVING PLANETS SHED THEIR RINGS AND FORMED THE MOONS...



LAPLACE'S HYPOTHESIS OF THE FORMATION OF PLANETS

RESCUE THROUGH THE FOURTH DIMENSION!

BERT BRANDON, ACE INVESTIGATOR FOR *INTERPLANETARY INSURANCE, INC.*, WAS ACCUSTOMED TO UNUSUAL ASSIGNMENTS! BUT THIS LATEST ONE TOPPED THEM ALL! HE WAS SUPPOSED TO RESCUE A PRINCE WHO WASN'T THERE, BY WORKING IN A DIMENSION HE COULDN'T SEE--WITH AN INVENTION THAT HADN'T BEEN INVENTED!

THE *FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL RETRIEVER* WAS SUPPOSED TO RECOVER THE KIDNAPED PRINCE--BUT INSTEAD IT BROUGHT BACK THIS MONSTROSITY!

GROWRRR!!

SPACEGRAM

WM. J. EMORY,
INTERPLANETARY
INSURANCE, INC.,
CAPITOL CITY, EARTH.

DEAR BOSS!

WHEN YOU CALLED ME IN TO TAKE A NEW ASSIGNMENT TO NORTH AMERICA, I THOUGHT YOU WERE JOKING!
THEN YOU EXPLAINED IT WAS TO THE PLANET XTAR IN THE NORTH AMERICA NEBULA--BILLIONS OF MILES AWAY IN SPACE...

YOU SAY *I.I.I.* HAS INSURED THE SUCCESS OF A NEW INVENTION--FOR 100 MILLION CREDITS? WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THE INVENTION?

THE RULER OF XTAR NEEDS IT TO RESCUE HIS KIDNAPED SON!

IF THE MACHINE DOESN'T WORK BY NOON OF JULY 1ST, OUR TIME, THE *I.I.I.* WILL PAY THE RULER 100 MILLION! IF IT DOES, WE GET A PREMIUM OF 10 MILLION! NOW GET GOING--WE NEED THE MONEY!

MYSTERY IN SPACE

SPACEGRAM

DEAR BOSS:

SINCE IT'S ONLY A WEEK TO THE JULY 1ST DEADLINE, I HOPPED A FASTER-THAN-LIGHT SPACE LINER FOR XTAR, NOT HAVING HEARD OF THE PLANET BEFORE, I GOT A BRIEFING FROM THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN...

DESPITE ITS CROWDED CONDITIONS, NO INTELLIGENT CREATURE DARES LIVE ON THE DARK SIDE OF XTAR! TOO MANY DEADLY NOCTURNAL ANIMALS AND PLANETS!

HMM! I SEE THE LIGHT, CAPTAIN! I INTEND TO STAY IN IT!

XTAR

"ON XTAR, I SECURED AN IMMEDIATE AUDIENCE WITH THE PLANETARY LEADER..."

THE RANSOM DEMANDED FOR MY SON IS 100 MILLION CREDITS--TO BE PAID BY NOON OF JULY 1ST! IF PROFESSOR DZOR'S MACHINE WORKS, FINE! IF NOT, YOUR INSURANCE WILL PAY THE RANSOM!

I GET IT! EITHER WAY YOU CAN'T LOSE!

"NEXT I WENT TO SEE PROFESSOR DZOR IN HIS WELL-GUARDED LABORATORY..."

I CALL MY INVENTION "THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL RETRIEVER"! WHEN COMPLETED, IT WILL FIND THE PRINCE, AND RETURN HIM HERE, IN THIS CABINET!

HOW DOES IT WORK, PROFESSOR?

"...STRIPPED OF TECHNICAL DOUBLE TALK HERE'S HOW THE PROFESSOR EXPLAINED IT.."

SUPPOSE WE WERE ALL PERFECTLY FLAT--THAT IS, TWO-DIMENSIONAL! IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH THE PRINCE BECAUSE OF THE LINE WHICH SEPARATES HIM FROM US...

PRINCE

"DZOR RETRIEVER"

BUT IF WE COULD REACH FOR THE TWO-DIMENSIONAL PRINCE FROM ABOVE--THROUGH THE THIRD DIMENSION--IT WOULD BE EASY TO RESCUE HIM! THAT'S THE PRINCIPLE OF MY MACHINE--EXCEPT THAT IT RESCUES THREE-DIMENSIONAL BEINGS THROUGH THE FOURTH DIMENSION!

PRINCE

"DZOR RETRIEVER"

IN A FEW MORE DAYS, MY INVENTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND THE PRINCE RESCUED!

A FEW MORE DAYS? PROFESSOR, YOU'VE GOT EXACTLY 52 HOURS, 20 MINUTES AND 10 SECONDS!

SPACEGRAM

DEAR BOBS:

24 HOURS LATER, I RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE PROFESSOR THAT HE WAS READY TO TEST HIS MACHINE! HE PUSHED A FEW BUTTONS--AND A MOMENT LATER.

I HEAR SOMETHING IN THE MACHINE!

OPEN IT UP, BRANDON! I'M TOO EXCITED TO LOOK!

THUMP!

"THEN, AS I FEARLESSLY OPENED THE CABINET--"

GREAT SOL! A-A TENTACLE PLANT--FROM THE DARK SIDE OF XTAR!

ONE TOUCH FROM THOSE TENTACLES IS FATAL! THEY CONTAIN A DEADLY POISON! OVER HERE--QUICK!

THAT PLANT--I'M ALLERGIC TO SOMETHING ABOUT IT--MY NOSE IS TWITCHING!

"I HELD OUT AS LONG AS I COULD--BUT FINALLY COULD REPRESS A SNEEZE NO LONGER..."

AH-CHOOO!

"A MOMENT LATER, THE PLANT SEEMED TO WITHER AND COLLAPSE TO THE FLOOR.."

BY GRLU--YOU'VE KILLED THE TENTACLE PLANT, NOW 2

I GUESS THE PLANT WAS MORE ALLERGIC TO MY SNEEZE THAN I WAS TO IT!

"THEN, THE NEXT MOMENT..!"

SOMEONE'S FIRED A ROCKET INTO THE ROOM!

SWOOSH!

SPACEGRAM

DEAR BOSS:

THE ROCKET LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A JULY FOURTH CELEBRATION -- EXCEPT THAT I REMEMBERED I WAS ON XTAR -- AND IT WAS ONLY JUNE 30... ANYWAY, WHEN THE ROCKET EXPLODED...

"IT ERUPTED INTO FIERY LETTERS SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR..."

PROFESSOR DZOR -- DESTROY YOUR MACHINE OR DIE BY NOON TOMORROW!

"THE THREAT TO THE PROFESSOR DIDN'T FRIGHTEN **ME** AT ALL! ANYWAY I TOOK IMMEDIATE PRECAUTIONS TO SAFEGUARD **HIS** LIFE..."

THERE ARE NO WINDOWS IN YOUR LAB, AND ONLY THIS ONE DOOR! LOCK YOURSELF INSIDE THE SEALED ROOM, WHILE I GUARD THE DOORWAY!

A GOOD IDEA, BRANDON!

"FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS, I LED A DOG'S LIFE...ACTING LIKE A WATCHDOG OUTSIDE THE LOCKED LABORATORY ROOM..."

YOU MUST BE HUNGRY, PROFESSOR! HOW ABOUT SOME FOOD?

I HAVE NO TIME TO EAT! I HAVE ONLY TWO HOURS TO COMPLETE MY INVENTION!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

"ONE HOUR LATER..."

YOU ALL RIGHT, DZOR? YOU HAVE EXACTLY ONE MORE HOUR...

TEN MINUTES MORE, AND I'LL BE FINISHED.

AIYYEEE! HELP! HELP!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

"THE DOOR WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE, SO I HAD TO BREAK IT IN..."

PROFESSOR! WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT'S HAPPENED--? GREAT STARS! IN THE CABINET! WH-WHAT'S -- THAT?

CRASHHH!!

"THE ROOM WAS SO DARK, I HAD TO USE MY CIGARETTE LIGHTER TO SEE..."

A NIGHT BEAST! THE SPACE-LINER CAPTAIN SHOWED ME A PICTURE OF XTAR'S MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL!

SPACEGRAM

DEAR BOSS:

AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M STILL ALIVE AND KICKING ... BOOTING MYSELF AROUND FOR EVER TAKING THIS ASSIGNMENT! BUT WHEN I FACED THE DEADLY NIGHT BEAST FROM THE DARK SIDE OF XTAR...

"--I THOUGHT IT WAS CURTAINS FOR BERT BRANDON--BLACK ONES!"

AND ME WITHOUT A WEAPON! NOTHING BUT THIS LIGHTER!

GROWR!

"BUT AS THE SHIMMERING LIGHT STRUCK THE NIGHT BEAST..."

THE NIGHT BEAST--OF COURSE! IT CAN'T STAND LIGHT! I'LL SWITCH ON ALL THE LIGHTS IN THE LAB--AND BLIND IT!

THUMP!

CLICK!

"ATTRACTED BY THE SUDDEN ILLUMINATION, THE GUARDS FROM OUTSIDE THE LAB RUSHED IN WITH DRAWN GUNS--AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER..."

NIGHT BEASTS NEVER VENTURE NEAR LIGHT--IT DRIVES THEM MAD! HOW DID IT GET IN HERE?

SAY, THAT'S RIGHT! THE ROOM WAS SEALED! AND WHERE IS THE PROFESSOR?

"SUDDENLY, SOMETHING CLICKED IN MY MIND LIKE A WALL SWITCH--AND THERE WAS LIGHT!"

IT'S FIVE MINUTES TO TWELVE--THE DEADLINE!

I FORGOT! IF THE MACHINE DOESN'T WORK, OR IF THE PRINCE ISN'T PRODUCED IN FIVE MINUTES, I.I.I. MUST PAY YOU 100 MILLION CREDITS!... GUARD--STEP OVER HERE!

"I TOLD THE KING WHAT HAD HAPPENED, BUT LEFT ONE QUESTION UNANSWERED..."

WHERE IS THE PROFESSOR? HOW COULD ANYONE COME INTO A SEALED, LOCKED ROOM--AND SPIRIT HIM OUT OF IT?

THE ANSWER TO THAT IS--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

THEN WHERE'S DZOR? WHERE IS MY SON?

DZOR IS RIGHT HERE--AND SO IS YOUR SON!

SPACEGRAM

DEAR BOSS:

THE CASE IS PRACTICALLY CLOSED--AND I.I.I. 10 MILLION CREDITS RICHER! I GAVE THE ARMED GUARD CERTAIN INSTRUCTIONS, AND THEN OPENED UP THE CABINET OF THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL RECEIVER...

JUST AS I FIGURED! A HIDDEN TRAPDOOR--INSIDE THE CABINET--JUST LIKE MAGICIANS USE BACK HOME ON EARTH!

ALL RIGHT, DZOR--THE JIG'S UP!

"A MOMENT LATER..."

MY SON! YOU'RE SAFE!

OF COURSE--WITH BERT BRANDON ON THE JOB! AND LET ME REMIND YOU THAT DZOR'S INVENTION *DID* PRODUCE THE PRINCE!

"AS THE GUARD LED DZOR AND HIS CONFEDERATE AWAY TO PRISON; I EXPLAINED."

IT WAS A CLEVER RACKET CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED BY DZOR! HE KIDNAPED THE PRINCE AND SENT YOU THE RANSOM NOTE! THEN HE LULLED YOU INTO THINKING HE'D RESCUE YOUR SON WITH HIS PHONY INVENTION! WHEN HE FEARED I MIGHT EXPOSE HIS FRAUD, HE ARRANGED WITH HIS CONFEDERATE TO KILL ME!

THE MACHINE WAS BUILT OVER A SECRET CELLAR, WHERE THE TENTACLE PLANT AND *NIGHT BEAST* WERE HIDDEN, ALONG WITH YOUR SON!

THE I.I.I. GETS ITS TEN MILLION! AND YOU, BERT, IF THERE'S ANY FAVOR YOU WANT--

AS LONG AS YOU MENTIONED IT, SIR, I'D LIKE TO HAVE THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL RETRIEVER--MAYBE I CAN MAKE IT WORK!

"AND SO, DEAR BOSS, IF YOU SHOULD EVER SEE THIS FINAL SPACEGRAM SUDDENLY APPEAR IN YOUR OFFICE, YOU'LL KNOW I SUCCEEDED! YOURS--BERT BRANDON."

BRANDON'S SPACEGRAM! IT APPEARED OUT OF THIN AIR! BERT BRANDON FIGURED OUT HOW TO WORK THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL RETRIEVER! I-I GUESS THAT MEANS HE'LL BE ASKING ME FOR ANOTHER RAISE IN SALARY!

The End

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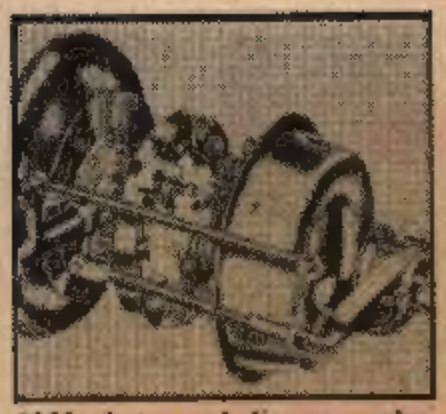

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